# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Programme 2024-25** |
| **DATE** | **19 March 2024** |
| **BY** | **Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change** |

I am pleased to announce the publication of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Programme for 2024 -2025. Given the enormous pressure on public sector resources at this time, combined with unprecedented construction inflation, this has been one of the most challenging programmes of recent years. However, we remain committed to investing in our flood and coastal risk management infrastructure. Last year we made over £75m available to Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). This year we will do the same. We are maintaining record levels of investment as we continue to deliver against our Programme for Government commitment to reduce flood risk to over 45,000 properties.

We will invest £34m capital funding in new schemes throughout Wales. A full breakdown and map of this investment has been published on [our website](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.wales%2Fflood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-programme-2024-2025&data=05%7C02%7CThomas.Mclean%40gov.wales%7Cdcee38ed390d49d2d21708dc4765b76d%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C638463749438447492%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=oGUw5D73KfIDLjCj5VJKlBz%2BIvJWDtHwtOmSjQJj3yM%3D&reserved=0). We are also maintaining record levels of revenue funding to our RMAs and the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre to undertake flood risk activities throughout the year. RMAs use their revenue funding to maintain assets, on awareness raising, warning and informing, to employ staff and to undertake flood investigations. The Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre provide our RMAs with improved data and information to underpin robust evidence-based decision making for Maritime Local Authorities, NRW and external stakeholders.

The prolonged period of wet weather we have experienced across Wales this winter has provided yet another reminder as to why this investment is necessary. We are in the midst of a climate emergency and our atmosphere is heating up and retaining more moisture. Despite international efforts, global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. That is why this winter is in the top 10 warmest and top 10 wettest on record for the UK. Wales is currently experiencing its 8th wettest winter, and just recorded its warmest ever February. The latest UK Climate Projections show that sea levels are projected to rise by over a metre in the next 100 years, whilst increased rainfall and storminess will significantly increase the risk of flooding.

In November, Storm Babet brought widespread flooding to North Wales and over 100 properties were flooded in Flintshire. After Christmas, Storms Gerrit and Henk flooded nearly 40 properties in South Wales. In October, 26 properties in Carmarthenshire were flooded when persistent heavy rain overwhelmed infrastructure in Ferryside and Llansteffan. As our climate becomes wetter, our river and drainage networks are under increasing pressure. But we know we must rise to these challenges to keep our communities safe. That is why we have set ourselves ambitious targets through our National Strategy and Programme for Government.

And that is also why I am so grateful to our RMAs, who will help us meet these targets. NRW and local authorities work tirelessly to develop new schemes, provide warnings, respond to incidents and maintain vast numbers of assets across Wales. A great deal of our flood risk management infrastructure is invisible. It might be an underground culvert, a small grass embankment in a park, or swale by a road. Every asset requires monitoring and maintenance. Our RMA staff keep thousands of assets working, all year round. They work within their communities to increase resilience and support community adaptation, and I am grateful for their efforts.

To help our local authorities manage localised minor flooding, we will be providing them with £4.2m to deliver 74 schemes via our small scale works grant. Since its introduction 8 years ago, the small scale works grant has been incredibly well received by local authorities. The simplified application process gives them the opportunity to carry out quick and cost-effective improvements to existing infrastructure. Due to their size, small scale schemes are often delivered by local construction firms, providing a benefit to the local economy.

Turning to our larger planned schemes, the programme commits to continue construction at Stephenson Street, Newport, one of the largest flood alleviation schemes ever constructed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Once completed, it will reduce risk to 800 properties. We are also providing NRW with £800k to carry out capital maintenance works at Sandycroft, Flintshire, reducing the risk to more than 200 properties in a community which experienced significant flooding in October 2023. This year will also see construction works commence at Llanfairfechan, Conwy, as the local authority looks to invest £1.4m in the sea defences to reduce risk to 43 properties. We have also made £1.1m available to Caerphilly County Borough Council to construct a scheme at Edwards Street, Ystrad Mynach, and £550k to Pembrokeshire County Council for their Lower Priory and Havens Head scheme. This will benefit 2 communities who have previously been impacted by flooding.

We are also nearing the end of our extensive Coastal Risk Management Programme. The programme has seen £288m worth of concentrated investment over 5 years by utilising public sector borrowing powers. The final 3 CRMP schemes will commence construction before the end of this financial year. We will be investing £16.6m in Kinmel Bay, £4m in Barmouth Viaduct Gardens and £4m in Llandudno. Once completed, the CRMP programme will have funded 15 schemes across Wales, benefitting over 15,000 properties. This was a unique opportunity for our maritime authorities to access millions of pounds in funding and improve the resilience of their coastal communities, keeping people safe for generations to come.

Our FCERM programme also recognises the crucial role that nature-based solutions will play in alleviating flooding in the future. The Natural flood Management (NFM) Accelerator Programme, launched in October 2023, will see a further £4.6m invested in nature-based solutions throughout Wales. The programme demonstrates our commitment to working with Welsh farmers, landowners, and third sector organisations throughout Wales. It will work with natural process to improve our natural environment, increase the amount of wetland and woodland habitats, and lower flood risk to up to 2,000 properties. It will fund 23 projects spread across 8 different Authority areas. Our National Strategy identifies Natural Flood Management as a crucial component to reducing the risk of future flooding in Wales. Natural flood management will improve biodiversity, increase carbon capture and reduce pollution. As well as improving our understanding of natural flood management, the accelerator programme will increase the number of NFM schemes throughout Wales and put us on track to deliver our Programme for Government Commitment by 2026. This work is being undertaken as part of our cooperation agreement with Plaid Cymru.

At a time of challenging budgets and accelerating climate change, this programme demonstrates our commitment to investing in flood risk management, keeping our communities safe and adaptable for generations to come.